

**Department of Transportation  
Public Information Meeting Summary  
Project No. 16-98  
Safety Improvements on Route 133**

**Town of Bridgewater  
Tuesday, April 17, 2012**

**Present:**

Connecticut Department of Transportation

William Britnell, P.E. – Principal Engineer – Highway Design  
Scott Bushee, P.E. – Supervising Engineer – Highway Design  
Erika Lindeberg, P.E. – Project Engineer – Highway Design  
Gabriele Hallock – Transportation Engineer – Highway Design  
Nicholas Ivanoff – Transportation Engineer – Highway Design  
Kenneth Fagnoli, P.E. – Assistant District Engineer – Construction  
Steven Degen – Project Coordinator – Rights of Way

Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials

Jonathan Chew – Executive Director  
Dave Hannon – Deputy Director

Town of Bridgewater

William Stuart – First Selectman  
Keith Buinauskas – Resident State Trooper

Approximately 70 to 80 people were present.

**Presentation:** At 7:00 p.m., a brief introduction was provided by First Selectman William Stuart, who stated Route 133 has been a safety concern for the Town for some time and indicated the Department of Transportation (Department) has reviewed the project since the last public information meeting held in 2008 and is proposing a revised design. Mr. Scott Bushee began the presentation by explaining that informational handouts were available including comment forms. Comments in addition to these gathered at the meeting would be appreciated within two weeks. It was also noted that the design presented at the meeting is conceptual. Comments received as part of the Public Information Meeting process would be reviewed with the Town officials prior to proceeding further with the design.

The presentation covered the following items:

- ⇒ A safety review was requested of the Department for Route 133. The review showed leaning outdated guiderail, settling retaining wall, rock outcrops, narrow lanes and shoulders
- ⇒ In 2008, the Department presented a project scope for safety improvements as follows:
  - Rock removal at Northrop Street to improve intersection sight distance
  - One mile of reconstruction and realignment; two 11 foot lanes and 2 foot shoulders
  - Drainage improvements
  - Two retaining walls up to 25 feet tall and 1,200 feet total length

- A closure of Route 133 and state route detour (Route 25, 202/7 and 67) of nine months
- Update guiderail for entire length (1 mile)
- ⇒ Concerns were expressed in 2008 related to:
  - Height of the retaining walls
  - Amount and length of reconstruction
  - Significant amount of clearing of the slope
  - Use of Northrop Street as a cut through by non-local traffic (speed).
- ⇒ 2012 Proposed Project Scope:
  - No rock removal at Northrop Street
  - Half-mile of reconstruction and realignment; including reconstruction at both the existing retaining wall and the mill area
  - One retaining wall, 13 feet high and 900 feet total length in vicinity of existing retaining wall
    - Earth Retaining System Wall (ERS Wall) proposed
    - Use of a form liner with natural stone pattern
    - Reduced environmental impact
    - Expedited construction; reducing duration of the detour – only five months
    - Update guiderail for entire length (1 mile) with proper post embedment
  - Approximate road closure and state route detour (Route 25, 202/7 & 67)
    - Accelerated construction techniques planned (incentive / disincentive contract)
    - Possible speed control measures on Northrop Street (speed tables and radar sign)
- ⇒ Rights-of-Way:
  - Several partial acquisitions required along the cut slope
  - Steve Degen explained the rights-of-way acquisition process
- ⇒ Cost & Schedule:
  - Total construction cost is estimated at \$10 million
  - Start of construction anticipated in 2015

**Public Comments and Questions:** The following questions and comments were made, as summarized below:

- ⇒ Several suggestions were made for design alternatives at the retaining wall:
  - Can gabions be installed on the cut slope?
  - Can a new retaining wall be built along Wewaka Brook?
  - Could the design include one wall on the cut slope and one wall along Wewaka Brook to reduce the slope impact?
  - Could a two-wall tiered design be used on the cut slope to reduce the exposed wall height?
- The design alternatives suggested by the public were previously reviewed by the Department. Several design options were reviewed with First Selectman William Stuart. The Earth Retaining System Wall presented at the meeting was selected

based on a minimal wall height, reduced slope impacts, and shorter detour duration than required with other design options.

- ⇒ Is it possible to cut back the rock outcroppings to accommodate a wider road without a retaining wall? – The slopes along the western edge of road are not all rock, but comprised of ledge of inconsistent elevation, boulders and soil. To cut back the rock outcrop without providing a retaining structure would result in unstable slope conditions.
- ⇒ Should the temporary gabion wall be replaced now and what would happen if it fails? – The Department monitors the wall stability on a frequent basis. If the temporary gabion retaining wall fails before safety improvements on Route 133 take place, the road may have to be closed. Gabions used in this application have an estimated fifteen year design life. If after completion of the project, the gabion wall fails, it should not affect the roadway. The alignment shift of Route 133 allows for a stable earth slope along Wewaka Brook without the use of a retaining structure. Slope protection may be necessary and could be constructed utilizing the rocks in the gabions. It is anticipated the stabilization work could be performed while maintaining an alternating one-way traffic pattern and would only be expected to take a few days.
- ⇒ There are drainage problems on Route 133 along the southern portion of the project. What will be done to address the drainage? – The southern portion of the project is now outside of the proposed reconstruction limits. If additional drainage inlets can be incorporated in the project without encroachment into the cut slope, they will be included.
- ⇒ Concerns were expressed about through traffic using Northrop Street as an unofficial detour. Also, what is involved in preventing “No Thru” trucks from entering Northrop Street? – Northrop Street is a public, municipally-owned road. The Department cannot restrict public access. Changes in use would need to be made through the Town. First Selectman Stuart indicated the Town has already closed Northrop Street to truck traffic.
- ⇒ Will there be any impact to use of the boat launch off Route 133 for Lake Lillinonah? – The boat launch will remain open. Access will only be available from the south. Route 133 will be closed immediately north of Northrop Street and the boat launch.
- ⇒ Is it possible to construct the project and maintain one direction of traffic on Route 133 or only work at night and maintain two-way traffic? – Maintaining one direction of traffic during construction is not feasible. Much of the area proposed for reconstruction is currently too narrow (21 feet) to accommodate construction equipment and one lane of traffic. If working only at night and maintaining two way traffic, the contractor would need to move equipment and materials to and from the work area daily, since there is not enough room for storage on-site while maintaining traffic. The daily mobilization would significantly reduce working time each night. That, combined with the fact that night work is less productive would extend the project duration into years, as opposed to months, as currently planned.
- ⇒ Should an emergency vehicle need to travel south from Bridgewater to Danbury hospital, could access be allowed along Route 133 through the work site? – The Department will review accommodations for emergency vehicles with the town. It may be possible to maintain one direction of emergency access throughout much of the road closure, utilizing the contractor’s access road.
- ⇒ Speed control devices are intended to be installed on Northrop Street; can the Department allocate personnel to patrol them as well? – The Department cannot allocate funds for traffic men on roads that are not part of the project detour.
- ⇒ Why isn’t Northrop Street the official detour for cars only? – The Department reviewed Northrop Street and determined the geometry, width, grade and roadside features make it unsuitable to safely accommodate the volume of traffic that currently uses Route 133.

- ⇒ Is it necessary to replace the full mile of guiderail and could the same type of rail system be utilized as the replacement rail? – The existing two cable rail with wood posts along the project is deteriorating, lacks proper support in a number of locations and is leaning. The guiderail within the project limits needs to be replaced. The existing rail type does not meet current safety standards for reinstallation. A modern rail system is required.
- ⇒ Is it necessary to include a fence on the top of the retaining wall? Can the fence be placed behind the wall? What type of fence is planned? - The building code requires that vertical surfaces in excess of four feet be protected. The fence can be placed at the back of the wall to reduce its visibility. The type of fence and color will be coordinated with the Town.
- ⇒ How do you prevent graffiti and vandalism from occurring on the wall? – Due to the location of the wall, access by vandals seems limited and the risk of vandalism appears low. Protective treatments that facilitate the removal of vandalism are available and will be reviewed for use on the project.
- ⇒ Is it possible for the slope to have a “boulder look”, as was used recently on the Route 7 Expressway? – The site does not allow for the shotcrete type construction that was used along the Route 7 Expressway. A substantial retaining structure is required at this location. There are many wall stone patterns and colors available and will be reviewed further with the First Selectman.
- ⇒ What is anticipated for landscaping between the wall and the road? Is it possible to have trees or plantings in this area? – The current design proposes a 6 feet grass shelf for snow, drainage and safety between the edge of road and the wall. If the wall was constructed further from the road to allow room for plantings, a much taller wall would be required and more clearing of the existing slope.
- ⇒ What is involved with reforestation of the slope post construction, and how long will it take to look “natural”? – The Department’s landscape design team will develop plans to revegetate the slope. The landscape plan will be coordinated with the Town. A period of three to five years is recommended for the landscaping to begin to have a natural appearance.
- ⇒ Is it possible to realign the utility so it is not under the roadway? Previous trenching for the utility has led to pavement distress. – Significant changes to the alignment of the utility line would require splicing of fiber optic cables, which is time consuming and costly. When the utility line was first placed, the trench was excavated by the utility company and backfilled with a trench patch. Under this project, the utility will only be slightly shifted to allow room for the new guiderail. Splicing will not be required. The new pavement structure for the entire roadway will be subsequently constructed to the Departments specifications. Settlement is not expected above the utility line with the proposed roadway reconstruction.
- ⇒ If the utility is damaged during construction, how long would an interruption be and what would be the effect on the detour? – The utility company (Level 3) will be performing the relocation, not the State. Having the utility staff on site will expedite restoration. The work is planned during the detour window; additional delay would not be anticipated.
- ⇒ Concern was expressed over erosion along the eastern slope of Wewaka Brook and a request made for it to be addressed under the safety project. – The area of concern for erosion is on private property opposite Route 133. The Department cannot perform slope repairs along the brook on private property that are not related to the stability of the State highway.
- ⇒ Has any consideration been given to the addition of a bike lane on Route 133? – Bike lanes are typically five feet wide. The addition of a bike lane would require additional roadway width and a taller retaining wall. Based on the comments received from the 2008

public information meeting and recently from the Town, there is a desire to minimize the height of the retaining wall, clearing of the slope behind the wall and the pavement width. As a result, the roadway width has been reduced below standards to 26 feet. The Department will review the possibility of including signage to alert motorists to cyclists. The existing roadway is only 21 feet in several areas. The reconstructed width of 26 feet will provide an additional 5 feet of pavement and an improvement for cyclists over the current condition.

- ⇒ Is Route 133 currently safe? – Route 133 is reviewed weekly by the local maintenance supervisor. In addition, the Department monitors the stability of the temporary retaining wall frequently. The roadway is currently stable without undermining and is determined as suitable for travel by the Department. Rock outcroppings, narrow pavement, leaning outdated guiderail, and erosion along the embankment indicate a need for a safety upgrade.
- ⇒ Is five months an accurate estimate for the road closure? – The construction time estimate for the ERS Wall is based on experienced engineering judgment utilizing production rates from prior similar construction by the Department's Bridge and Construction Offices. Additionally, the contract is planned in two phases, which will allow for engineering drawings and technical data to be reviewed and approved by the Department, as well as materials to be procured before the contractor is allowed to close the roadway. An incentive / disincentive contract is planned to further strengthen that the five month detour is adhered to. The Department has confidence in being able to reopen the roadway to traffic within five months.

The general consensus seemed to be that although no one is in favor of closing Route 133 for any duration, the reduced project scope from 2008 and need for the work seemed to be accepted overall. Details regarding such things as the appearance of the wall and location and type of fence will be discussed further with Town officials with consensus reached in the next design phase of this project. It was stated that the Department will review information received from the meeting with First Selectman, William T. Stuart, subsequent to the comment period.

The question and answer session was concluded at approximately 9:00 p.m.